



# STATE OF THE RIVER 2001

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## RIVER PROFILE

The Hanalei River is located on the north shore of the Hawaiian Island of Kauai. The sixteen-mile-long river drains a 19.1 square mile watershed. Flow of the river is extremely flashy due to high rainfall, short travel distances, steep slopes inland, with flow magnitudes changing ten-fold over a few hours. Flows can be as low as 20-50 million gallons per day or as high as 6 billion gallons per day. The lower two miles of the river flows through the Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge, through two large landowners (Princeville Corporation and Hanalei Valley Farms), and past wetland taro farms, small businesses, and residences before emptying into Hanalei Bay.



The Hanalei River is among the five largest rivers in Hawaii, free-flowing into an estuarine bay, the third largest and most pristine in Hawaii. It is outstanding in Hawaii and in the Pacific for the abundance and quality of natural, cultural and scenic resources. Hanalei wetland taro lo'i provide the only habitat in

the entire state that supports feeding and breeding of all four species of endangered Hawaiian waterbirds: the stilt (ae'o), moorhen (alae ula), coot (alae keokeo) and the Hawaiian duck (koloa maoli). Taro lo'i was the traditional, cultural and economic focus of life in Hanalei prior to the white man's arrival. The view from atop the hill overlooking Hanalei valley is as it was over a hundred years ago.

## Community Vision

As part of its planning effort, the Hui established a 50-year vision

*The Hanalei River Hui strives to malama the ahupua'a (watershed) of Hanalei guided by the Hawaiian principals of malama 'aina (sustainability and stewardship), pono (integrity and balance), laulima (cooperation), and aloha, especially as it applies to cultural equity and respect. We endeavor to keep protected what has been protected. We embrace and support those actions that are appropriate to this place and its heritage, those actions that contribute to our shared vision.*

## AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS INITIATIVE AND THE COMMUNITY

On July 30, 1998, President Clinton designated the Hanalei River as an American Heritage River based on a nomination developed by the University of Hawaii and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The program is funded through an annual grant from the USDA Forest Service. In addition to the diversity that it brought to the American Heritage River (AHR) initiative in the areas of Native Hawaiian culture, Pacific biodiversity, and geography, the nomination satisfied two important AHR selection criteria. It represented a planning effort in the very beginning stages and involved a community that could benefit significantly from federal assistance.

In its first two years, the Hanalei Heritage River (HHR) program focused its efforts on building community capacity, organizational structure and the development and implementation of its 5-year Watershed Action Plan. The community of Hanalei, through a series of public meetings, established the Hanalei River Hui (Hui, n. family/group, v. to come together) to provide the leadership, initiative and works to manage and coordinate local activities undertaken through the Hanalei Heritage River program. Hui members are, by definition, those who participate. The Hui makes the majority of its decisions using the process of consensus, which insures balance while still validating individual perspectives.

The "River Navigator (RN)" consists of three part-time coordinators. The Watershed Coordinator facilitates the implementation of the program's environmental and scientific endeavors and forums. The Community Program Coordinator focuses on the "people-based" and cultural aspects of the program, including public events. The Operations Coordinator manages the program's administrative functions, such as accounting, record keeping and publications. The community's decision to hire three part-time coordinators and support staff rather than one federal employee has created a team synergy with a far greater output than its "FTE" equivalency.



### Objectives

- Natural river system that supports native ecosystems
- Fishable, swimmable, accessible river
- Community directed planning/decision making
- Economy based on diversity, local, small, shared prosperity
- Share our efforts generously
- Preserve working rural character
- Support taro farming
- Provide educational and informational opportunities
- Identification, conservation and education of heritage resources Enhanced awareness of local culture and responsible recreation

## What We Need To Succeed

As in many rural communities in the Nation, Hanalei is struggling with the inevitable conflicts that arise over the use and management of natural resources by a rapidly expanding population base dependent upon tourism as its primary economic engine. Hanalei enjoys a relatively pristine watershed (ahupua'a) and has traditionally enjoyed a full complement of instream native species and viable habitat, both instream & out. However, this may be changing, according to data collected in both the HHR Water Quality project and our long-term ecological monitoring program (LTEMP), which were both started in June of 2000.

The Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge, purchased in 1972, is literally the center of the ahupua'a. A 1985 Master Plan for the Refuge exists but is not currently being followed. The Refuge is scheduled to have a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) developed in 2007. The Hanalei River Hui would like to see this CCP completed as soon as possible so that the Refuge can succeed in its mandate to protect and manage habitat for endangered Hawaiian waterbirds and protect the river and riparian ecosystems.

The Hanalei community's challenge is to hold on to its traditional lifestyles and value systems which are inextricably linked to uniquely Hawaiian natural resources and to survive sustainably as an island community in the face of escalating economic pressures. The local vision is to develop a truly community-led management system for the Hanalei River & ahupua'a in partnership with local, state, and federal government. The purpose of this system will be to determine management of, and maximize interaction with, the area's resources in the most effective and sustainable manner, resulting in locally-led planning, agreements, partnerships and endeavors largely not in place at program inception. Through education and training opportunities, the community will seek to encourage enterprises that embrace the area's unique history, heritage and natural resources as a way to encourage greater economic diversity and sustainability.

Funds provided through the American Heritage River Initiative are essential to the implementation of this community vision through the establishment of community capacity, strategic planning, and a local AHR office staffed by 3 part-time coordinators and support staff to carry out the functions of the river navigator as specified in the AHR initiative ("RN staff"). With the assistance of the RN Staff, this program will bring together prospective partners to leverage their financial and technical support toward innovative projects and activities. Funds will be used to assist and coordinate community-led planning, utilizing consensus, to address forest protection and health, water quality, soil protection, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, tree planting, revegetation, appropriate silvicultural activities on nonfederal lands, as well as for program awareness and outreach, education, and landowner recognition. They are also needed to help citizens understand the value of healthy community forests in their quality of life and consider this in the implementation of their Watershed Action Plan.

## Community Priorities

### • Hanalei Heritage River (HHR) community office

- Serves as the center for the implementation of the community's vision and Watershed Action Plan, capacity building, community education and training.
- Community Resource Library, including references, videos, geographical information system and internet access, and community planning and cultural history documents
- Public outreach
- Community newsletters (4-6)
- Community presentations including Earth Day, Hanalei Farmer's Market, etc.
- HHR website
- Hui Educational, Community and Government Forum Series

### • Ahupua'a Inventory & Assessment

- Cooperative River Basin Study with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Endangered species bird counting project on select taro loi.
- Long Term Ecological Monitoring Project (LTEMP) to qualitatively assess Hanalei's 'o'opu nakea population and habitat

### • Water Quality Monitoring

- year-round bacteria sampling program of the Hanalei River and Hanalei Bay
- develop a sedimentation project
- student water quality sampling project

### • Taro Support

- facilitate and coordinate support for taro production, taro research, and value added products



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## Hanalei American Heritage River Partners

### Federal Partners:

- **USDA Forest Service**
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Environmental Protection Agency
- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Geological Survey
- USDA Farm Services Agency
- Economic Development Administration
- USDA Rural Development
- US Small Business Administration
- Federal Emergency Management Administration
- National Park Service
- Federal Highway Administration

### State and County Partners:

- Dept. of Land & Natural Resources
- Dept. of Transportation
- Dept. of Health
- University of Hawaii
- Kauai Community College
- Kauai Visitor's Bureau
- County of Kauai Administration,
- County of Kauai Planning Department
- County of Kauai Public Works Department
- Kauai Economic Development Board

### Other Partners:

- Hanalei Community Association
- Kauai North Shore Business Council
- Hanalei Elementary School
- Kula Intermediate and High School
- Limahuli National Tropical Botanical Garden
- Hanalei Roads Committee
- Hui Maka'ainana O'makana
- The Waipa Foundation
- Kilauea Point Natural History Association
- The Sierra Club



<http://www.hanaleiriver.org>